

Comments of R. C. Burton of the National Cancer Control Initiative (Australia)

Comment:

I have a long standing interest in a possible causal relationship between active and passive exposure to cigarette smoke and breast cancer. My most recent publication was:
Burton R C, Sulaiman N. Cigarette smoking and breast cancer, is a real risk emerging? Medical Journal of Australia 2000; 172:550-552.

In that review I concluded that a causal association had not been established but was both biologically and epidemiologically plausible and likely.

I have read carefully and with interest the relevant pages on breast cancer and cigarette smoke exposure contained in the first 11 pages of Chapter 7 and pages 7-91 and 7-155 of the proposed revision to your 1997 report, which I obtained from the web address:

<http://www.arb.ca.gov/toxics/ets/dreport/dreDort.htm>.

I agree with the conclusion that the totality of findings now provides evidence of a causative association between both active cigarette smoking and exposure to environmental tobacco smoke and breast cancer. The studies published since I reviewed the literature are of high quality, and taken together with the older literature support the conclusion that has been reached in that report.

In particular, the risks associated with cigarette smoke exposure when the breast is undergoing rapid cell division should be emphasized. That is, during childhood through puberty and in first pregnancy. I would be pleased to provide further commentary should you require it.

Response:

Thank you for your comments.